

Understanding the Online Jewellery Retail Market

An Integrated Model to Conduct SEM

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ABSTRACT

Research into e-commerce is becoming more and more popular; however the jewellery industry is somewhat special. There are very few studies having adapted a strategic marketing perspective on the online jewellery retail market.

This study suggested an integrated online marketing strategy which focuses on the search engine marketing (SEM) approach. A detailed procedure of conducting search engine marketing (SEM) is introduced. Through the method of online questionnaires, with the help of social networks and email approaches, this dissertation aims to understand the online jewellery retail market, reduce the gap between the retailers and consumers and devise an effective model to promote the business.

The results of the market research prove the great potential of online retail market and meanwhile indicates relatively low-level of acceptance of online jewellery shopping. It is found that many people use search engines for online shopping which makes search engine marketing (SEM) activities worth investing money on. Furthermore, some relevant issues like acceptable price range for online jewellery shopping and important factors which influence the consumers are also draw and discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Initial Introduction and Justification for Study

Although the history of e-commerce is not long, more and more researchers show greater interest in this field. This is mainly due to the huge and rapid development of e-commerce. The comparison and understanding of various different online marketing channels are studied in this dissertation. Finding one channel or a combination of online marketing approaches which is most suitable for small or just-started online retailers is the first stage of the research.

The early research on e-commerce has mainly focussed on banner advertising, blogs and e-mail advertising, but many new channels appears to be extremely popular and develop dramatically, such as search engines and many social network websites. Social network marketing is generally useful and is playing an indispensable role in online marketing no matter for small- and medium-sized companies or large enterprises. And a great deal of information about the importance and advantages of search engine marketing activities for small- or medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) can be identified in previous studies. The supporting marketing literature has generally focused on several important aspects and key issues of search engine marketing (SEM).

This dissertation addresses the lack of understanding of the online jewellery market and online consumers, concentrating on the processes of conducting search engine marketing (SEM) activities, also involving several different popular online marketing channels to support the model and views on market such as social network marketing and e-mail approaches. The research conducted for this paper is therefore hoped to be helpful and valuable to not only Rings Store (www.ringsstore.co.uk) but

also those that are under the similar condition or in the same industry as Rings Store.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This research has two primary objectives. The first is to devise an integrated plan to do online marketing for small- or medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) given that online retailers mainly focus on search engine marketing activities. The second objective is to consider the market from both the consumers view and the company's view in order to learn more about the target market and conduct the evaluation of the model and provide some suggestions.

With the collaboration of Rings Store (www.ringsstore.co.uk), it is hoped that the model can be favourably devised and proved to be feasible and effective at the end of the research. Moreover, evaluation and improvements of the model are expected after the market research.

1.3 Context of the Study and Rings Store (www.ringsstore.co.uk)

Rings Store (www.ringsstore.co.uk), located in Manchester, is an online retailer that has recently been established but is part of a Company that has been trading in online jewellery for the last few years. The company has grown year on year and has ambitious growth plans for the future. Recently, a new website is being added to the current sites and identifying the most effective way to drive traffic to the new website is the key.

The company's owner shows a strong interest in several online marketing forms such as search engine optimisation (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC), social networks marketing (like Facebook and Twitter etc.) to help attract Internet users to the new website. According to the company's owner's words, being accessible to potential customers

is one of the keys to success. The company is seeking an integrated online marketing plan which is effective and can yield quick-results.

However, online marketing activity and spending can be a huge black hole and it is hard to monitor the performance of its advertising expenditure for an e-commerce business. As a result, evaluating the different types of online marketing approaches and then putting the emphasis on the most effective and with quick-results marketing approach is on the top of the list. We conduct this study with the aim of devising a feasible and integrated online marketing plan that can be implemented with a low cost.

1.4 Format of the Dissertation

Chapter One – Introduction

The introduction shows a definitive direction of the report. This chapter provides a brief background into the area of study, lists the context of the company and the purpose of the research and investigation. Rings Store is also introduced with the detailed research questions and objectives

.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Literature review part establishes a theoretical framework for the area of study, provides the definitions of the key study issues and discusses previous studies and researches in the area. This part provides a solid academic foundation for later study and research.

Chapter Three – Methodology

Based on the previous literature study, it is decided to conduct the market research and design the marketing plan focusing on search engine marketing (SEM). The reason and an integrated and detailed procedure to conduct search engine marketing

(SEM) are provided in the first part of this chapter.

Moreover, the use of questionnaires is introduced. Reasons for the choice of method and explanations of how the research was designed and conducted are included. Finally, the limitations are discussed as well.

Chapter Four – Findings

In this chapter, the data collected from questionnaires will be analysed, summarized and generally discussed. Graphs, diagrams and tables will be used to help understanding the data.

Chapter Five – Analysis and Discussion

The findings and results of the research are analysed critically. The details of the entire marketing plan and findings of the study are presented with the support of some questionnaire survey results. And the results are mainly focus on the company, Rings Store. Some changes and rethinking will be conducted to the previous assumed model and procedure according to what is achieved in the market research.

Chapter Six – Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusion chapter is to conclude the research and propose some recommendations and suggestions for the company, Rings Store. The research objectives and study questions will be reviewed and main findings and results of the study will be emphasised. Certainly, the future research and limitations will be discussed and highlighted as well.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the topic of online marketing strategy, mainly focusing on search engine marketing, is a relatively new field of research, in recent years it has been recognised by scholars as having a major importance in online business study and has therefore become an established field of study and the research addressing it is growing at a rapid pace. However, there are not many literatures talking about e-commerce for jewellery industry. As a result, the first short paragraph will briefly introduce the current condition of e-commerce for jewellery industry, and then follows by further reviews and discussions of online shopping, online marketing and several different online marketing approaches such as social network marketing and search engine marketing (SEM).

2.1 Introduction: E-commerce for Jewellery Industry

According to Kurth (2011), the jewellery industry has a relatively old structure, with a focus on long-term customer relationships and normally a relatively small potential customer base. Furthermore, the jewellery retail market is based on many relatively small jewellery retailers. At the point of sale, when the customer can see and touch the jewellery, emotions have a big influence. Many traditional jewellery retailers think about investing in ecommerce, but they only have a vague idea of what this means and what is crucial to make the investment successful (Kurth, 2011). E-commerce is a great sales opportunity for jewellers since it allows them to reach a wider customer base and so to increase market share, given that consumers can shop 24/7 (Martinez 2006, Kurth 2011). Although there are many ways to do business for jewellery retailers in the future, e-commerce can absolutely be a good opportunity.

The World Wide Web (WWW) enables businesses to explore new markets that otherwise cannot be reached (Limayem et al., 2000). Consequently, e-commerce has emerged as the most important way of doing business for years to come. Kalakota and Whinston (1996) first stated that e-commerce has two distinct forms: business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C). And in jewellery industry, business-to-consumer form is more common and more dominant. Basically, the industry has been fully ready to enter the online trading market as many other industries did. However, as mentioned, due to the special nature of the jewelry industry, there are many challenges and obstacles to face and across.

2.2 Online Shopping

Business-to-customer (B2C) e-commerce is often referred to as online shopping. In this information age, online shopping has gradually become an indispensable part of the daily life for people. Since the late 1990s, online shopping has taken off as an increasing number of consumers purchase increasingly diversified products on the Internet (Zhou et al., 2007). One can look at online shopping both from the perspective of the consumers and from that of the company.

From the consumer perspective

Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular and a part of people's daily life recently. Online retail sales are estimated to grow from \$172 billion in 2005 to \$329 billion in 2010 (Johnson 2005, cited by Zhou et al., 2007). It is quite certain that the online retail sales keep showing the growing trend in 2011 and 2012. Moreover, Internet users' ability to shop online has significantly improved from 16% to 32% since March 2001. The potential benefits of online shopping for consumers include convenience, various selection, low price, original services, personal attention, and easy access to information, among others (Zhou et al., 2007). Park and Kim (2003) classified the attributes of online stores into four categories: merchandise, customer

service and promotions, navigation and convenience, and security. Merchandising includes product-related characteristics, which means consumers are more likely to be satisfied with a richer product assortment. This can be an extremely important aspect to study when thinking reversely from the company perspective when devising an online marketing plan. The second attribute category for online shopping is customer service and promotion. Various online discount information, return and payment policy, delivery information and answers to frequently asked questions are all included in this. The third attribute category is navigation and convenience which are related to the user interface of an online store (Szymanski and Hise 2000, cited by Park and Kim, 2003). As a result, most online shopping stores provide a product search engine, site map, and navigation sequence guidance function to help consumers' searching and purchasing. The final one is security of online transactions, which is the reason why online shopping sites always provide personal information privacy protection policy and guarantee for transaction security (Elliot and Fowell 2000, cited by Park and Kim, 2003).

From the company perspective

Companies can earn a much higher percentage of revenue through online transactions than traditional channels such as a real shop (Barua et al., 2001). Barua et al. (op. cit.) also highlighted several benefits a company can earn from selling products directly online, which exert a positive impact on fiscal health: 'As more revenue flows in directly, the company can reduce the size of their sales staff. They can also shift tasks to the customer – such as gathering information about products, entering orders and tracking shipments – that were formerly handled by employees.' Companies do benefit a lot from such efficiencies and eventually become able to abate operating costs. Furthermore, due to the relatively low operating costs, starting a new business in online retail industry seems to be easier and more possible. This can explain the phenomenon that there are more and more small- and medium-sized businesses doing online retail in recent decades.

Restraints do exist – building consumer trust online

Although online shopping is becoming more and more popular both for consumers and firms, there are both drivers and restraints. Many consumers are sceptical or suspicious about the functional mechanisms of electronic commerce, its intransparent processes and effects, and the quality of many products that are offered online (Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002). Eastlick et al. (2006) described the special environment and situation of online retailers as a “double-edged sword”. Consumers’ privacy concerns about the loss of control over their information may weaken relationships and affect whether consumers will purchase online (Parasuraman and Zinkhan 2002, cited by Eastlick et al., 2006). There are many researches taking great effort to solve this problem. The key issue is building consumer trust online.

2.3 Online Marketing

Marketing is generally to try every effort to promote companies’ products or services. And online marketing is to conduct the marketing activities over the Internet.

Huge possibilities of the Internet age

IMRG Research in 2008 (cited by Roberts, 2008) showed that the UK’s retail e-commerce sales grew dramatically approximately by 40% from the first half 2007 to the first half of 2008. There were 2.3 billion Internet users in the world in December 31 2011 (Internet World Stats, 2012) - 44% of them are from Asia, 22.1% from Europe and 12.0% from North America. The potential of the Internet as a huge market is undoubted.

Moreover, the potential of the Internet as a commercial marketing medium has been studied by various researchers in recent decades. Basically, marketing activity occurs through three types of channels: distribution, transaction and communication channels (Peterson et al. 1997, cited by Kiang et al., 2000). Moreover, online

marketing activities generally occur in the same way. Kiang et al. (2000) summarized the various advantages for those companies selling directly on the Internet from previous publications and they are classified into the three types of channels (see in Table 1 below).

Distribution Channel	Transaction Channel	Communication Channel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eliminate huge inventories, storage costs, utilities and space rental, etc. ➤ Shorten supply chain and reduce commission and operating costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve visibility and reach a much bigger customer base. ➤ Improve revenues by exploiting cross-selling opportunities. ➤ Streamline transaction processing, thereby reducing task complexity, paperwork and transaction costs. ➤ Customize promotion and sales to individual customers and improve flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve ability of accessing, organizing and communicating information. ➤ Improve interactivity and perceptual experience. ➤ Gather information about customers via surveys and contests for new product development and introduction, relationship building and personalization.

Table 1. Advantages for companies of selling directly on the Internet

(Sourced from Kiang et al.,2000)

An evolutionary journey

For most firms, becoming an e-business is an evolutionary journey (Earl, 2000). Marketing over the Internet, or e-commerce, represents a potentially important and little understood new marketing channel. As Barua et al. (2001) states, “The Internet’s reach makes it possible for traditional companies to find new customers

without being constrained by geography or the size of the customer and without having to break the bank on marketing expenses.” The importance of online marketing has been self-evident.

Various channels of online marketing

According to Boone et al. (2008), online advertising and marketing, once synonymous with banner, pop-up, and e-mail advertising, has developed into a multi-faced advertising channel with enormous growth prospects. However, today, not only banner, pop-up and e-mail advertising, but also search engine marketing, social network marketing, rich media, video advertising and many others are becoming common means to do online marketing.

2.4 Social Network Marketing

Social network marketing is to conducting marketing activities via social network websites. As social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are becoming more and more popular and the users of them keep growing dramatically, it is becoming an unavoidable field when studying online marketing. The necessity of social network marketing and how it works are introduced and discussed.

Why social network marketing?

According to Van den Bulte and Wuyts (2007), the decline in effectiveness of mass media may be the primary reason for B2C marketers’ renewed interest in social networks today. They are concerned about decreasing returns on their marketing efforts. For example, there are several pharmaceutical firms believing that physicians are now saturated with sales calls, and are trying to complement or even partially replace their traditional detailing and direct marketing with various forms of Word-of-mouth marketing (Van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). Another example is hotel industry, reports show that hotel will continue to experience declines in

revenue and profits in 2010, however, the online channel is the only growth channel and it is still the case in 2011 (Starkov and Safer, 2010).

Advertising on social networks or on social media, such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, is starting to surge because Internet users enjoy creating their own pages and looking at their friends' pages. Moreover, it is estimated that worldwide social network spending is expected to rise to \$2.8 billion by 2010 (Oser 2006, cited by Boone et al., 2008). Furthermore, in addition to facilitating, online social networks are also increasingly being recognized as an important source of information influencing the adoption and use of products and services (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003).

The effects of Word-of-Mouth

The social network's charm is that people's communication circle wider and not limited to the geographical constraints. The effects of Word-of-Mouth (WOM, or in other word, viral marketing) can be considerable on the social networks. Brown et al. (2007) claimed that Word-of-mouth communications is a major part of online consumer interactions, particularly within the environment of online communities. Trusov et al. (2009) also regarded Word-of-mouth marketing as a particularly prominent feature on the Internet. The Internet provides numerous venues for consumers to share their views, preferences or experiences with others, as well as opportunities for firms to take advantages of WOM marketing. Furthermore, one of the fastest-growing arenas of the World Wide Web (WWW) is the space of so-called social networking sites (Trusov et al., 2009).

Great platform for innovations

Social networks can also be a powerful tool in launching new products, promoting new ideas and innovations in various fields. Firms have long tried to exploit social networks to improve their ability to understand, forecast, and manage how new products diffuse through the marketplace (Van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). In the

1990s, high-tech marketers turned to a variant on those ideas that similarly emphasized the importance of carefully targeting one's customers with a view of leveraging them to gain yet other customers (Moore 1991, cited by Van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). It is clear that social network theory has much to offer marketers in this area.

2.5 Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing (SEM), one of the youngest marketing disciplines, is soon becoming one of the most powerful, engaging and measurable marketing activities employed by today's leading marketing organizations (Hendrikse, 2008).

As mentioned before, Park and Kim (2003) argued that online shopping stores can offer hyperlinks to more extensive product information such as price comparison, product testimonials and product demonstrations. The Internet allows an easy and direct way to merchandising, and the increasing use of search engines even makes it easier. When you use a search engine for online shopping, the number of results may be staggering. And in the mountains of merchandise, how to get their commodities to be noticed by the consumer or increase an interest by consumer is a major issue that companies need to face. Having a web site is the first step to start business in online retail industry and sell products directly to consumers, however, Hendrikse (2008) argued that having a web site can be meaningless if no one knows it exists and the web site is equally as meaningless if those who come to the site don't make any transactions.

Defining search engine marketing

Search engine marketing (SEM) is generally split into two categories: pay-per-click search advertising (PPC) and search engine optimization (SEO). And as shown in figure 1, most businesses that involve themselves in SEM typically allocate 30% of

their budget on PPC campaigns and the remaining 70% on SEO activities (Hendrikse, 2008).

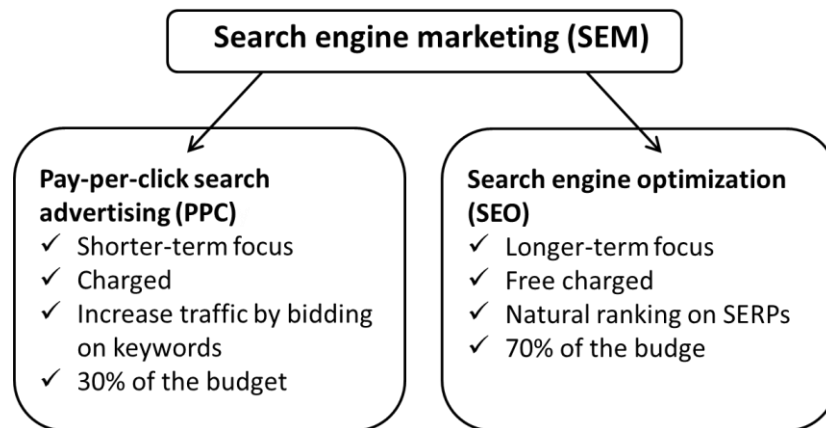


Figure 1. Features of PPC and SEO (source from Hendrikse, 2008)

Targeting the right audiences

According to Hendrikse (2008), one of the most common understandings of SEM is to do all the best to attain one of the top search engine results page (SERP) placements for one particular keyword. This can lead marketing managers to spend money on the useless, engage in some activities that aim to trick the search engines and eventually lead to the delisting from many of the major search engines.

In fact, the core of online marketing is about getting the most qualified audiences to your website and SEM should help to target the right audiences. That attaches a great importance to defining and targeting the potential customers and tricking untargeted visitors to the website provides no benefit to anyone. By bringing qualified visitors to the website, the expectation becomes that the website is properly prepared for these visitors and conversion metrics has been established to measure the effectiveness of the SEM efforts (Hendrikse, 2008).

Ranking factors of search engine result page (SERP) results

According to Hendrikse (2008) and Enge et al. (2010), there are several key determinants of organic search engine results page (SERP) listings:

- Keyword use in title tag and body text (web pages should have more content than code)
- Global website authority (as determined by the Google PageRank™ algorithm)
- Age of site
- Reputable and topically-relevant websites linking to one's website (inbound links). There is a high priority placed on the keywords within the link anchor on these external sites. (This shows the importance of the combination of social network marketing when designing online marketing plan.)
- Anchor text of in-bound link
- Website is linking to other reputable and topically-relevant websites (outbound links)
- Frequency of content changes and updates made to the website (the more frequent the better)
- Easy to find and complete site maps with a clear information hierarchy
- The number of times search engine users click on the link within the SERP and don't immediately bounce back to the SERP

Goals and objectives – being visible, nice traffic and high ROI

According to Enge et al. (2010), like with any other marketing function, it is important to set specific goals and objectives. Although search engine marketing is not a cure-all for businesses, it can fit into a company's overall business strategy in three critical ways: site visibility, website traffic and high return on investment (ROI). Consumers always assume that top placement in the search engines is likely to be the top in the business. And site visibility and traffic to your site is naturally a conscience cycle relationship. However, a nice visibility and traffic to the site are not enough. A well-designed search engine marketing strategy can result in a very high return on investment when contrasted with other methods of marketing.

Hendrikse (2008) suggested that setting up a conversion metrics is critical to establishing an effective SEO and PPC campaign. Conversion metrics measures to

what extent the messages converted subjects to the final goal. It indicates complete success of the persuasive message. And it is one of the most important measurements to evaluate. If one takes Rings Store as example, the relevant conversion metrics for Rings Store can be purchase made online, information form completed and webinar registered.

Keyword research

Keyword research is a keyword to search engine marketing (SEM) as one of the most imperative, valuable and high-return activities in the search engine marketing (SEM) field. In Boone's word (2008), search marketing is based on advertisers who place bids for keywords. For example, a car company might use the relevant keywords like "buying cars", "car reviews" or "automotive awards" in webpage SEO and PPC campaigns. However, through the detective work of dissecting your market's keyword demand, you learn not only which terms and phrases to target with SEO and pay for PPC, but also more about your customers as a whole (Enge et al.,2010).

Hendrikse (2008) raised two important tips when determining the final list of keywords. "Firstly, stay away from generic terms as they typically have the highest PPC price and don't provide the best qualified visitors. The more specific the term or phrase is, the more qualified the visitors will be and normally the lower the cost of the campaign. Secondly, remember that SEO has a longer-term focus and PPC has a shorter-term focus. The keywords should be more conservative. And in the PPC campaign, more risky and questionable keywords can be experimented with. If the keyword is not delivering as well as expected in the PPC campaign, the keyword can be easily changed in real time whereas altering the website's SEO will take more time and effort."

There are a few tools which can help determine the final list of keywords. Google AdWords Keyword Tool can be a start and it is free to use. Keyword tools such as Hubspot's Keyword Grader are especially useful when picking keywords and

searching for effective idea-rich suggestions (Ruffolo, 2012). Other keyword tools worth exploring are SEOmoz, SEMrush, and Keyword Discovery. Another excellent way to select keywords is analysing your competition. When people think about business marketing the phrase that almost always comes to mind is “Keep your subsidiaries close and your competitors closer.” Choosing to review products or companies within the same industry can target traffic to a specific consumer audience (Ruffolo, 2012). Some online tools like KeyCompete and SEMrush can provide insights into what competitive sites are using for keywords in their SEM activities (Hendrikse, 2008). Finding one or a combination of several useful keyword tools is necessary when doing a keyword research.

Different ways to measure effectiveness

If there is a limited budget, the better and more common choice is an optimising option which means the system determines which is the better performing ad and will be displayed more often (Guerini et al., 2010). And Guerini et al. (2010) also illustrated several common measurements for identifying the performance of each single ad:

- **Click-through Rate (CTR):** measures the number of clicks divided by the number of impressions that the ads have received (the number of impressions is the number of times an ad has been displayed in the Google Network). A higher CTR indicates which message has the highest initial impact.
- **Conversion Rate:** how many user clicks turned into actual conversions for the advertiser. Conversion rate equals the number of conversions divided by the number of ad clicks. A higher conversion rate indicates complete success of the persuasive message.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** if someone clicks on an ad, and buys something on your site, that click is a conversion from a site visit to a sale. Other conversions can be page views or signups. By assigning a value to a conversion the resulting conversions represents a return on investment. The more relevant the action the user performs, the higher the value we must assign to that action.

- **Google Analytic Tool:** Google Analytics is a web analytics tool that gives insights into website traffic, such as number of visited pages, time spent on the site location of visitors, etc. it indicates interest or attitude generated in the subjects. Usually, a combined measurement is better in order to allow complex targeting options and monitor various aspects of indicators.

Web site quality is important – content and design

Developing a SEM-friendly website is another important work. There are two key factors to making the site accessible to search engines. One is keeping site content fresh, attractive and indexable (Enge et al., 2010; Hendrikse, 2008).

The other one is the usability and search friendliness of the site. Compared to poor designed sites which are hard to navigate, a highly usable site with clean layout is definitely more likely to receive links (Enge et al., 2010). According to J. Ethier et al. (2006), “web site quality is a noteworthy factor that affects the cognitive processes leading to emotions while shopping.” Szymanski and Hise (2000, cited by Park and Kim, 2003) stated that online shopping is thought to be pleasurable and satisfying to consumers when the retailer sites are fast, uncluttered and easy-to-navigate and uncluttered and easy-to-navigate sites economize shopping time and the cognitive effort consumers expend figuring out how to shop effectively online.

While the B2C market is growing and profitable, the competition for market share is also increasing in many retail sectors (eg., books, travel, information, music, insurance, electronics, jewellery). Therefore, to maintain competitiveness, it is imperative for e-retailers to invest time and money to design, develop, and maintain high quality web sites, since customers are more likely to shop on web sites that exhibit high quality attributes (Ethier, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction of Model and Detailed Procedure

This study aims to suggest an ideal model of doing online marketing for a small-sized online retailer which may just started the business. After research, devise a plan and run a questionnaire to the potential customers and real customers to evaluate the previous model.

The online world can be an integration platform for a variety of information and channels' interaction and collaboration. Although the research is mainly discussing search engine marketing (SEM), social network marketing and the e-mail channel still play vital roles in the entire network marketing plans. There is an inseparable relationship between SEM and these other online marketing channels.

Focusing on search engine marketing

The business originally carried out in the network, and online marketing is the most targeted and correlation. It is the fastest and the most feasible way to boost visitors and sales. According to Enge et al. (2010), one of the most direct monetization strategies for search engine marketing is driving relevant traffic to an e-commerce shop to boost sales. Search traffic is among the best quality available on the Web, primarily because a search user has expressed a specific goal through her query, and when this matches a product the web store carries, conversion rates are often extremely high.

Moreover, for a small- or medium-sized and new established online retailer, the budget for marketing is limited. Search engine marketing is famous of the low cost and high return. The high pertinence determines search engine marketing to be the

first choice for small- or medium-sized online business to start their marketing activities.

Hypothesis and procedure model

An entire model of online marketing focusing on search engine marketing (SEM) is followed. The picture shows the relationship between search engine marketing and other online marketing channels. As showed in figure 2, this dissertation suggested applying social networks when in the planning stage of SEM. And both social network marketing and e-mail channel are used at the measuring and changes stage of SEM.

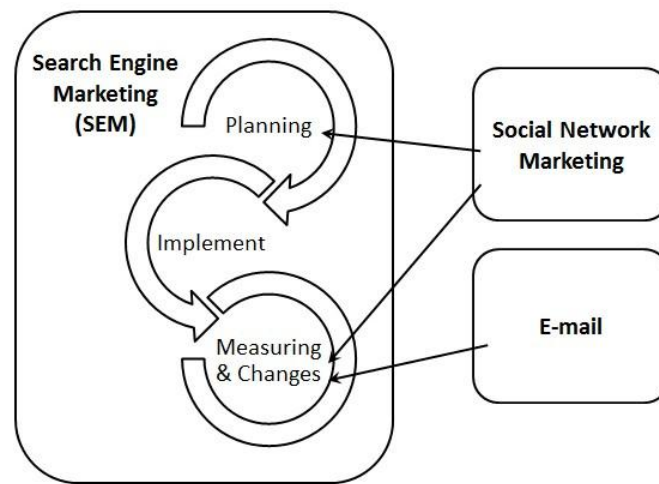


Figure 2. The roles of social network marketing and email channels in SEM

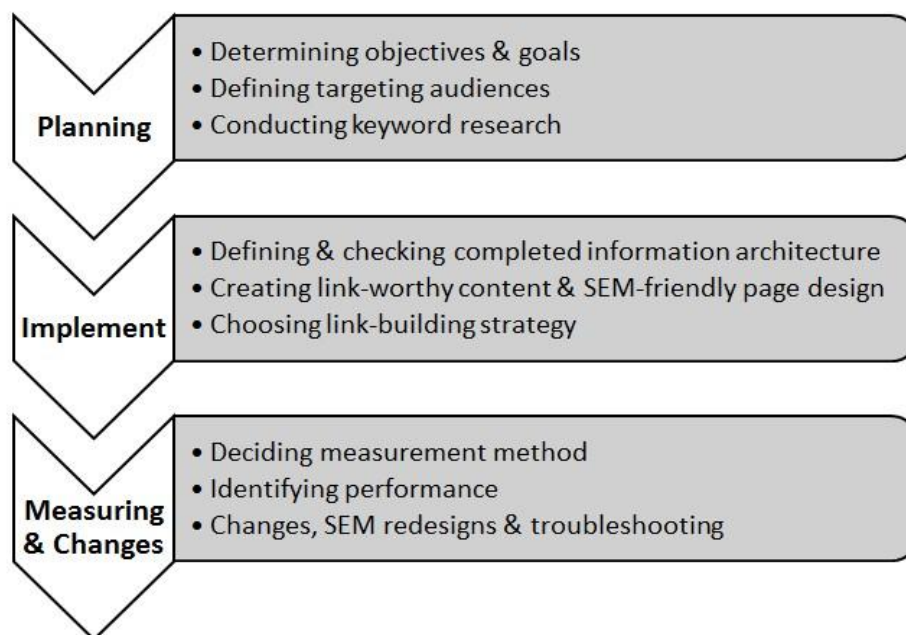


Figure 3. A detailed procedure to conduct search engine marketing (SEM)

3.2 Methodological Approach

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The network based questionnaire set out to fulfil the objectives set by Rings Store and aimed to understand the marketplace of online jewellery retail, utilized customers' and potential customers' opinions in order to evaluate the devised model and procedure of search engine marketing and make positive changes and improvement to the present plan. The approach was considered to be the most efficient in the circumstances, as most people are not willing to spend their time to undertake a detailed interview on a one to one basis. And as we are looking for the opinion of the entire online market, a larger quantity of the samples is more important than some more detailed personal views.

Furthermore, from an academic perspective, the survey is an unambiguous choice. The largest impact of online market research so far has been in the area of quantitative survey research, both in terms of volume and value (Poynter, 2010). And according to what Poynter (2010) cited from the 2009 ESOMAR Global Market Research Report, by 2008, the value of online quantitative market research was 20% of the global research total. By contrast, telephone quantitative accounted for 18%, face-to-face surveys for 12%, and qualitative research was reported as representing about 14% of global market research revenues.

For the purpose of providing the company with a feasible and effective search engine marketing (SEM) approach and convincing the importance of SEM, market research had to be conducted as part of the data collection. For this reason, it was imperative to collect the views among the Internet users – the potential customers and Rings Store's real customers.

3.2.2 Distributing Methods

Questionnaires are mainly distributed via Facebook, Twitter and some other social network websites by posting the survey link on these sites. It is hoped to targeting the audience who originally use Internet frequently and as a result are friendlier to online shopping. It is expected that the targeting audience are naturally the potential customers of Rings Store. Membership of online social networks has recently exploded at an exponential rate (Cheung et al., 2011). For example, the market share of the top 20 social networking websites grew by 11.5 percent from January 2007 to February 2007, social network website activity accounted for 6.5 percent of all Internet traffic in February 2007 (Hitwise 2007, cited by Cheung et al., 2011). Simply, social networking has become a huge social mapping, but the dissemination of information in the network society is more rapid, convenient and efficient.

Except for distributing via several social networks, the questionnaire is also distributed by email. This is mostly the term 'email survey' which normally refers to a survey that is emailed to respondents (Poynter, 2010). According to Enge et al. (2010), data released by SEMPO in early 2009 shows that email marketing is one of the top-three most-efficient forms of advertising or marketing companies spend money on in terms of the return on investment (ROI) or return on ad spend (ROAS) that they yield. The questionnaire is emailed to the real customers of Rings Store who have registered the website or have bought some products from the site. The questionnaire link was sent with a concise covering letter (see appendix) with clear reasons for the research and why it is important and also providing guarantees of confidentiality. The opinions and views from the real customers of Rings Store can be seen as the most direct and efficient way to collect information for the marketing plan. Requests for participation are sent to registered customers of Rings Store by an email with the survey link.

3.2.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was aimed to be designed as a well presented and laid out

questionnaire, not too bulky and not too many questions. Moreover, open questions were avoided to keep the survey quick and easy to complete, including the instructions.

First of all, the length of questionnaire must be short; otherwise there can be a relatively higher rejection rate and lower interest for the survey takers to finish the survey. As a result, the questionnaire was designed to be only ten simple questions and nine of them asked multiple-choice. The remaining question is a ranking which is simply dragging the more preferred answer to an upper position.

Considering that all the company's business is internet-based, and the issuance of questionnaires is through the network, it is assumed that all responders of the questionnaire are frequent users of the Internet. At the beginning part of the questionnaire, survey takers are asked about the basic personal information such as gender and age. Following is one question asking about daily use of search engines. The answers are expected to be the same as predicted that most of the survey takers are using search engines very frequently. There are three questions focusing on the acceptance and views on online shopping. The information of the shopping history online is very valuable and useful information which implies the possibility for these Internet users conduct a real transaction online. One of the three questions investigated the price sensitivity of the online jewellery buying. Moreover, two questions asked about using search engines for online shopping. Finally, one more question ranking the importance and influence when shopping jewellery online.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The data received from the questionnaires was transferred into graphs, diagrams and tables using Microsoft Excel to allow for analysis. Using the literature reviewed for the study, the results were interpreted, combined and compared against previous findings and assumptions. More importantly, the results were used to proof and give suggestions and improvement to the assumed model and procedures. The data was

analysed with the intention of clarifying meaning and developing understanding of the results. The interpretations are also expressed to the company in the form of a search engine marketing report.

3.2.5 Validity and Reliability

In the entire process of the research, validity and reliability was constantly considered with planning and actions implemented. It is aimed to reduce any possible negative effects on the data and findings. When designing the questions of the survey, suggestions of other researchers (Poynter, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Eastby-Smith et al., 2002) were taken that increase reliability and reliability as much as possible and make sure that the questionnaire is friendly to the Internet users. The questionnaire was designed to be easy analysed and well targeting to the objectives of the study.

3.2.6 Limitations

The survey was all conducted via Internet considering the company's business environment. However, if using the Internet to distribute the questionnaire, it will be extremely difficult to control the survey takers. The people surveyed may come from many different areas, with a variety of cultural and educational background, and these factors are likely to affect the final result. Therefore some questions to understanding the basic situation of the respondents are set in the questionnaire. However, originally, the potential customers of online shopping are a group of Internet users with many different background and live in various situations. It is believed that this issue will not cause serious deviations or problems to the survey data results.

However, there is another limitation of the questionnaire research. Except for the distributions of the survey link via social network sites, some questionnaires are distributed to the real customers or registered users of Rings Store by sending email to them with the survey link. As a result, among the obtained questionnaire

responses, how much percentage of questionnaires is from the existed customers of the company's website and how much is from other Internet users, these are not known.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The questionnaire was distributed and received 207 responses of which 200 were completed. In this chapter, the data were summarized and made into graphs, tables and diagrams.

4.1 Demographics

Due to the limited length of the questionnaire, there are only two questions asking about the basic information. In 200 completed questionnaires, 46 pieces are from male and the rest 154 are from female. There are 22 pieces from individuals under 20, 173 from those whose age are between 20 to 40, and only 5 survey takers are over 40. The following diagrams show the percentage of data.

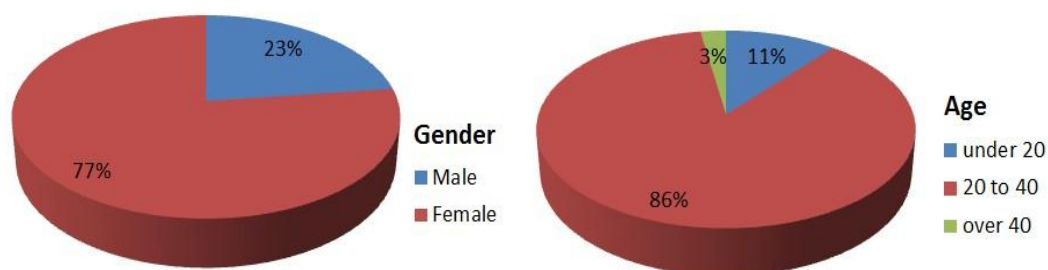


Figure 4 & 5. Basic information of questionnaire recipients

Those who use Internet a lot are called “people comfort with the Internet”. The comfort level has a positive relationship with online shopping tendency (Zhou et al., 2007), and this means the questionnaire recipients are exactly the potential consumers of Rings Store.

Since the questionnaire is titled as “Jewellery online shopping and SEM”, and according to the findings displayed above, it is implied that women are more willing

to fill in the questionnaire and show more interest in online shopping and jewellery shopping. Similarly, the keywords “jewellery shopping” and “online shopping” seem to be more attractive to individuals from 20 to 40 years old. It can be assumed that the main users of the network are the 20-40 year-old crowd. People under 20 also show some interest in the survey, however, being not financially independent can be a main reason for them to be removed from the potential consumer list. The amount of money which is accessible to them is limited and they are always under the control of the adults. But they are still a group of people who are really important to the company for two reasons. Firstly, this young generation grew up in Internet and information age, they have a higher-level of acceptance, a lower-level of web apprehensiveness and less sceptical of e-business. Secondly, they are going to be the main potential consumers several years later. The pre-connection and pre-building of trust relationship is assignable. This is one way to build the brand name and grow the business in several years.

4.2 Daily use of search engines

There is one question asking the frequency of using search engines (like Google). Answers are expected to show a very frequent use of search engines. And as showed in figure 6 below, the fact that is indeed the case.

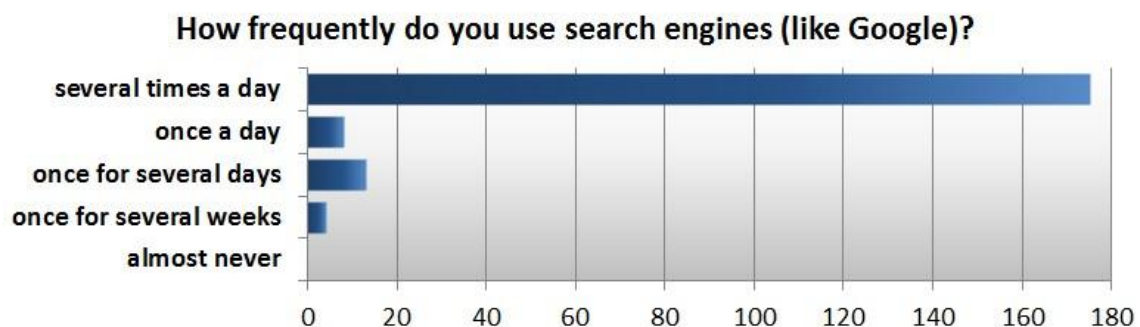


Figure 6. Frequency of using search engines

There are 175 people, 88 percentages, claimed to use search engines several times a

day. Only 4 people use search engines once for several week or less. The result proves that search engine is playing a vital role in the online world.

4.3 Views on online shopping

There are three questions focusing on the acceptance level and views on online shopping. There is one question asking the online shopping experience and another asking the online jewellery shopping history. Following is the results for these two questions.

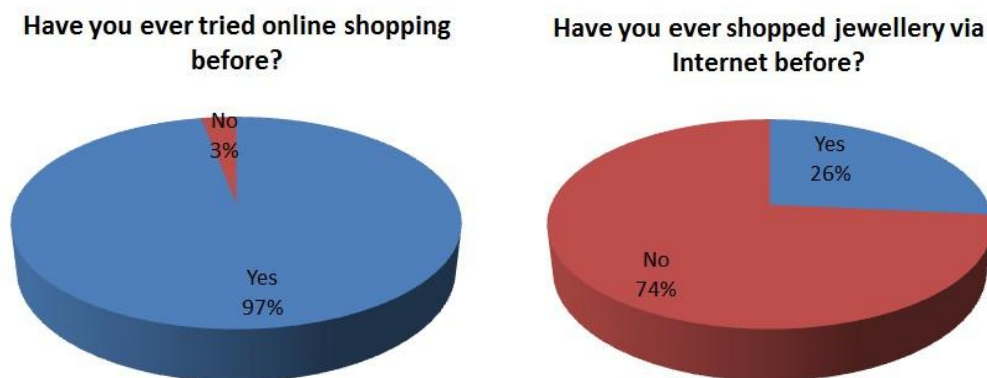


Figure 7 & 8. Experience of online shopping and jewellery online shopping

Seeing from the data, almost all of the survey takers (194 individuals among 200) have shopped online before. In contrast, only 26 percentages (53 individuals among 200) have the experience of shopping jewellery online.

The result fully confirmed Kurth (2011)'s view that in jewellery business, emotions have a big influence when the customer can really see and touch the jewellery. Trust is the key to online shopping and online shopping jewellery is even more dependent on consumers' trust in the site. As a result, Rings Store is facing a big challenge to reach a wider customer base and build trust relationship with consumers. This is not an easy task for a new site like Rings Store.

However, it is still good news that more than a quarter of people have experience of online jewellery shopping. According to Zhou et al. (2007), successful online shopping experience can have positive influence on online shopping tendency. It is hopeful that more and more consumers will accept online jewellery shopping in the future.

There is one more question asking about the acceptable price range of jewellery shopping online. The results of the question are showing below.

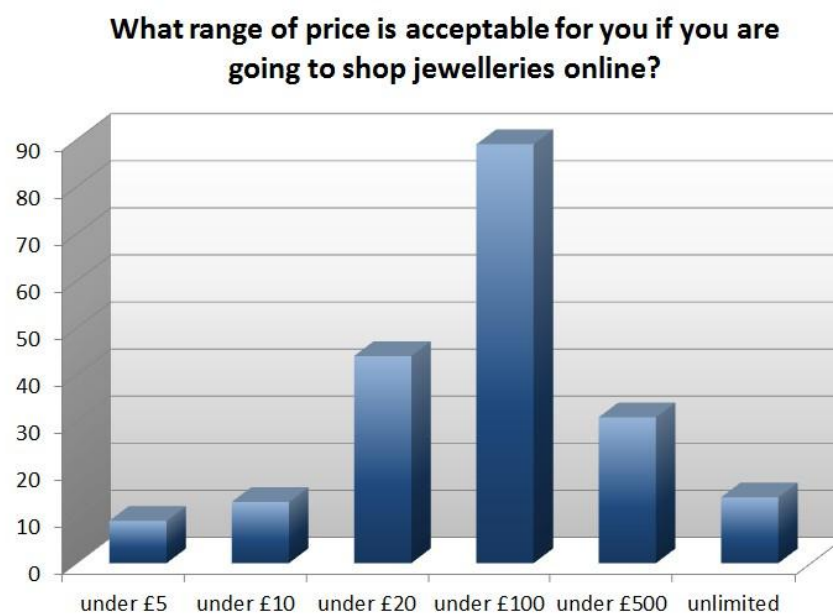


Figure 9. Acceptable price range of jewellery shopping online

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Under £5	9	5%
2	Under £10	13	7%
3	Under £20	44	22%
4	Under £100	89	45%
5	Under £500	31	16%
6	Unlimited	14	7%
Total		200	100%

Table 2. Detailed results for price range question

Statistic	Value
Mean	3.81
Standard deviation	1.14

Table 3. Some statistics of the price range question results

As shown in figure 9, the results show a typical normal distribution curve. Almost half of the samples accept the price range under £100 for buying jewellery online. If we use number (#) to present the answer, we got 3.81 for the mean and standard deviation is 1.14. As a result, we can assume that most people can accept the price under £84. The calculation process is as followed.

$$\frac{£100 - £20}{4 - 3} = \frac{£100 - x}{4 - 3.81}$$

$$x = 84.4 \approx 84$$

There are 44 and 89 people (respectively 22% and 45% of the samples) accept the price no more than £20 and £100. According to all these results, the company should try not to exceeding £100 when pricing most of their products. Or, the price is recommended to stay in the range between £10 and £100 for most products.

4.4 Search engines for online shopping

Online consumers tend to be convenience-oriented, recreational and economic shoppers appear to become dominant recently (Zhou et al., 2007). Using search engines can be one option for those convenience-oriented consumers. By figuring out how frequent the consumers use search engines for online shopping and the keywords they use, we can understand consumers' behaviour pattern of using search engines for online shopping. This can be very useful for the company's keywords research. Following are the results of these two questions.

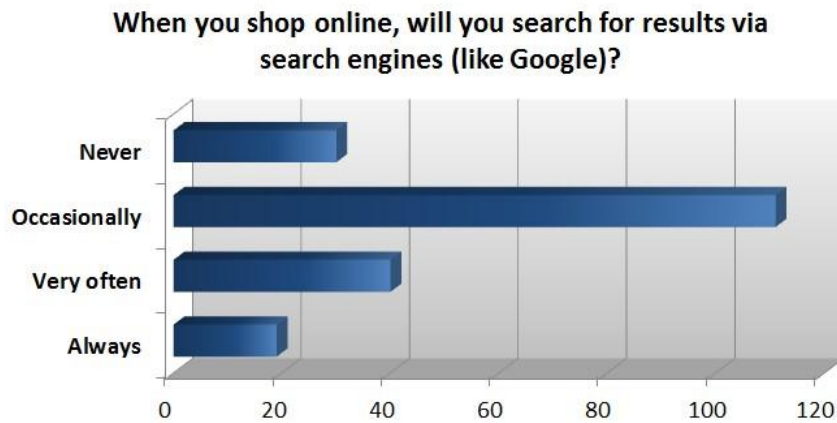


Figure 10. Frequency of using search engines for online shopping

It is showed that more than half of the survey takers occasionally use search engine for online shopping (111 of 200 samples) and one fifth use search engines very often (40 of 200 samples). This indicates that the search engine is an effective channel to lead consumers to a shopping site. Using search engine as a powerful and effective weapon to boom or at least increase the website visits is a very wise choice. And it is worth spending money on search engine marketing (SEM).

There is another question asking about the keywords used for searching rings on search engines. The company's name "Rings store" is stated as an answer choice and this is also the keywords that the company are using currently for the search engine marketing (SEM) activities.

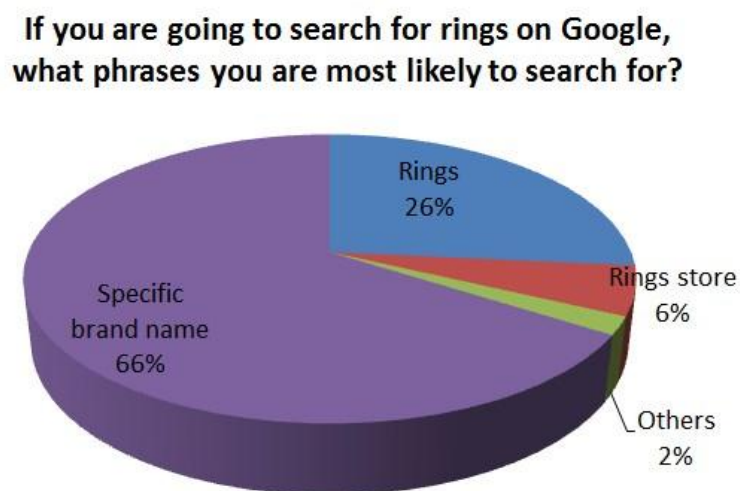


Figure 11. Keywords used for searching rings on search engines like Google

According to the answers of the question, most people tend to search specific brand name if they are going to shop rings online (132 of 200 questionnaire responders chose “specific brand name such as ‘Swarovski’”). However, there are still more than a quarter of the answers are “rings” (53 of 200 samples). And 6% of the survey takers chose to use “rings store” as the searching keywords (11 of 200 samples).

4.5 Consumer factors in online jewellery shopping

There is one ranking questions in the questionnaire. Responders were asked to rank the importance of eight essential factors of online jewellery shopping.

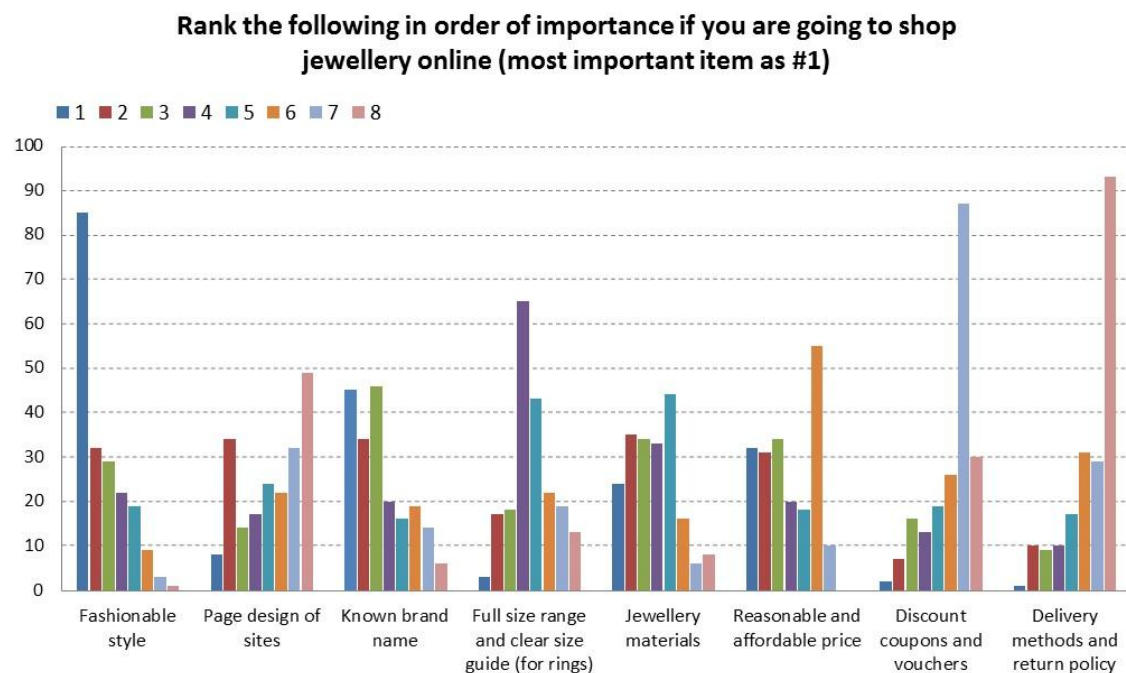


Figure 12. Ranking results of importance factors in jewellery online shopping activity

Seeing from the results, nearly half of the survey takers think that fashionable style is the most important in jewellery online shopping. And discount information, delivery methods and return policy are relatively not so vital if compared to other six major factors. In contrast, except for the fashionable style, discount coupons, delivery

methods and return policy, the results of other five possible factors are more complex and hard to conclude, especially the page design of sites. Many respondents ranked it as the second important factor while many others ranked it as the least vital factor.

Known brand name seems to be quite important since most of the respondents rank it as the first, the second or the third. This indicates that the jewellery industry, to a certain degree, relies a lot upon Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and the brand name does affect the sales.

Furthermore, most people put the “full size range and clear size guide” factor in the third place. For “jewellery materials”, people who rank it respectively as the first, the second, the third and the fourth are almost the same amount. And no one ranked “reasonable and affordable price” as the least significant factor.

4.6 Others

The last of the questionnaire asked about types of rings that consumers are more willing to buy online. It is a multiple-choice question and survey takers can choose more than one answer. This one is purely designed for Rings Store to help deciding the products assortments and stock amount of rings classified by different functions. Although this question seems to be irrelevant to the online marketing topic, the premise of online shopping does have influence on the results. Figure 13 below shows the results of this question.

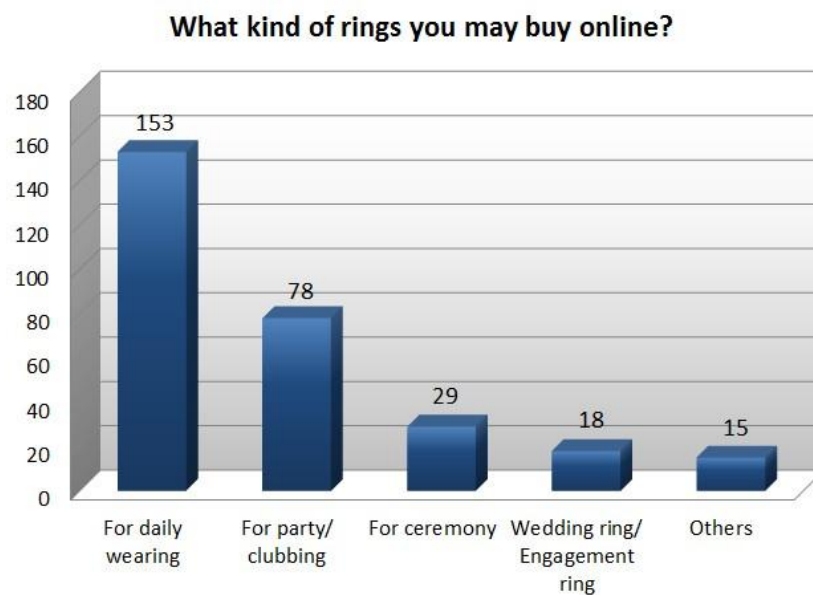


Figure 13. Types of rings that consumers are willing to buy online

More than three quarter of the respondents (77%) claimed that they will buy rings for daily wearing online. And approximately 40 percentages of the respondents claimed they are willing to buy party or clubbing rings online. But there are not so much people will choose online shopping to buy rings for more formal occasions or extremely important and meaningful rings like wedding rings or engagement rings. Moreover, there are some respondents chose "others" and five of which complemented the answer as "for gifts", three of which said they will never shop rings online.

As a result, it is recommended that the company do not be too insistence on expensive and formal rings, but more practical to operate daily used rings.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in methodology chapter, an entire model of online marketing focusing on search engine marketing (SEM) was introduced to the company. As figure 14 shows, both social network marketing approach and email marketing approach are used to support the search engine marketing plan. In this chapter, further discussion will be conducted with both the results of market questionnaire and the assumed marketing model. Data gathered from the research will be able to improve the entire model to some extent.

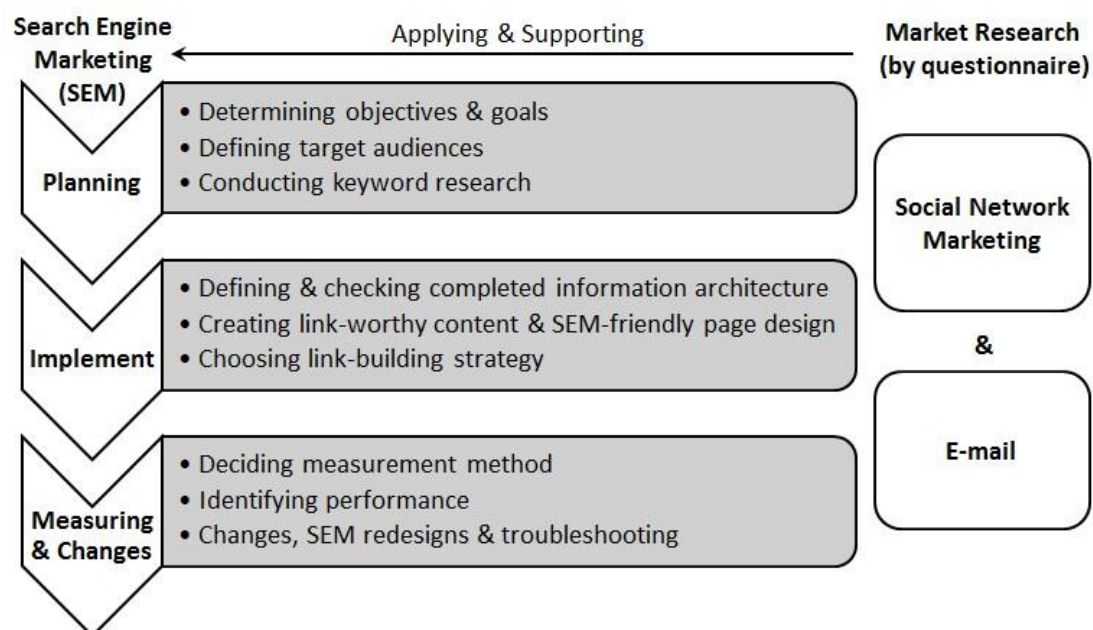


Figure 14. Social network marketing and email approach are applying to the entire search engine marketing (SEM) approaches in the procedure.

5.1 Determining objectives and goals

According to Hendrikse (2008)'s conversion metrics model, considering that Rings store is the website which offers a wide range of rings for many occasions, some

conversion activities are listed as follows. Table 4 shows the conversion metrics that can be used to successfully measure and qualify the effectiveness of the SEM campaign for Rings Store.

Conversion Metrics	Benefit
Purchase made online	Increased revenues
Information form completed	Provided contact details and indicated specific interest in product
Webinar registered	Provided contact details and indicated specific interest in product

Table 4. Relevant conversion metrics for Rings Store

5.2 Defining and understanding target audience

Conversions are what the company wants and values, but finding out who are the company's targeting audience and what does the target audience want are the premise. There are some questions that must be posted and the answer to these must be clear before developing relevant keywords. The answers are assumed by me and the company. The market research conducting afterwards can be a proof to these answers or an opportunity to improve and modify these views.

Q: Who are the main target audiences of the websites?

"We are targeting individuals who have the intention to buy rings for various occasions including individuals who just want to buy rings and individuals who are looking for rings for any specific occasions."

It can be seen that the company is trying to target the audience in a relatively wide range. And in fact, the company's website does sell rings in almost every price range for all occasions. It is difficult to tell it is an advantage or a disadvantage for a new

online shopping site. But by monitor the sales and the results of the market research (conducted by online questionnaire), the focus of products and pricing pattern do need some changes.

Q: What are these individuals searching for?

"The potential customers may search for rings for any occasions within any price range. We hope to be able to provide a variety of products to cater to the various needs of the potential customers. "

Actually, according to the results of questionnaire, most people buy daily wearing rings and clubbing party rings online but people will seldom buy wedding rings or engagement rings online.

Q: What are their top 3 questions when they come to the website?

"I guess there can be two major kinds of possible customers. One is people who are just looking around and hoping to find good-looking stuffs. And others may look for rings for some specific occasions and they will keep looking until they find some products fit the needs. For those who are just looking for good-looking rings, the first priority is a satisfied style of the ring. Second, they may ask themselves: does the price seems to be reasonable and suitable or affordable? Thirdly, they may consider the functional performance or utility."

"Moreover, for those who are looking for rings for specific occasions, the functional performance may be the first thing to consider and can they find the rings for the specific occasion is decisive. And then comes to the style of the rings. Thirdly is the reasonable and affordable price."

Q: What does success mean for them?

"Purchase according to their needs and being satisfied with the rings, getting some useful information such as prices and styles before they decide which rings to buy and some other possible things can be a success for them. The main point is that the

customers can get what they want by our site. However, sometimes their objectives can be different from the company's objectives."

If compared to the objectives and goals of the company, it is clear that what the potential customers want sometimes can be totally different from the corporate perspective. However, this is common and should not be contrary to each other. The company hopes the website to be noticed. More traffic means the possibility that more customers and if more customers complete the information forms, and then further marketing activities can be easier. Of course, the ultimate goal of the company is more transactions made online to increase revenue. On the other hand, no matter customers are looking for products or just information, the company should provide what they want to attract them to the site and then consider how to retain or increase their interest to stay on the site, thereby allowing them to make further action such as registering the website, filling in membership forms or even purchasing products. In summary, it is aware of the importance of understanding the needs of customers. And then make every effort to cater to the needs of the customer.

5.3 Conducting keyword research

There are many keyword tool softwares can be used and the first thing to start with is creating a Google AdWords account and use their free keywords tracking tool. And the company will choose to use according to the characteristics of each tool. Some of the features and strengths of the various tools been mentioned in the previous literature review section. Following are the links to these tools:

Google AdWords Keywords Tracking Tool:

https://adwords.google.com/o/Targeting/Explorer?_c=1000000000&_u=100000000000&ideaRequestType=KEYWORD_IDEAS

Hubspot's Keyword Grader: <http://www.hubspot.com/products/keyword-grader/>

SEOMoz: <http://www.seomoz.org/>

SEMrush: <http://www.seomoz.org/>

Keyword Discovery: <http://www.keyworddiscovery.com/>

KeyCompete: <http://www.keywordspy.com/>

Although “rings store” does not appear to be the most popular searching keyword according to the questionnaire survey results, 6% is not a bad figure for the company to do SEM on. The most popular answer “specific brand name” is impossible and unrealistic for Rings Store because the website was just established and the brand name hasn't been known to the public. And the second popular answer “rings” is too general. Moreover, if “rings” is searched, the answer containing “rings store” can show up in the results page as well.

After analysis the results of questionnaire survey, it is recommended that the company keep using “rings store” as the keyword phase to conduct SEM activities and keep trying “rings store” on the keywords tools softwares to see the market performance. This will be further discussed in the performance identifying part.

5.4 Creating link-worthy content and SEM-friendly page design

Dos and Don'ts for page setup and page content

Content Dos	Content Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do have unique titles and page, descriptions for each web page ➤ Do tag all your images with descriptive text ➤ Do use text format modifiers like header, strong and emphasis tags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Don't duplicate content, make sure every page has unique, compelling and relevant content ➤ Don't bury key keyword information in images, Flash, JavaScript or AJAX; keep titles, headings and key

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do update your content regularly ➤ Do make as many hyperlinks within your content as possible; link keywords to other pages about those specific topics ➤ Do link to external sites that are related to page topics ➤ Do use lots of bulleted lists that can be scanned quickly and easily by visitors ➤ Do trim your content as much as possible – get to the point and reduce the amount of marketing - speak ➤ Do develop content with the goal in mind with plenty of call - to - actions related to conversion pages 	<p>content in the main text content of the page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Don't have too much on the page, this destroys the visitor ability to know what to do next or meet your conversion objective ➤ Don't have more code within the page than copy content when you examine the page's source code
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Table 5. Do's and Don'ts in website content (sourced from Hendrikse, 2008)

Importance of page design

Clear and beautiful web page design is not only conducive to the SEM, but also an advantage to attract and keep customers for online shopping. No one will spend money on a site that looks chaotic, cheap and unprofessional. A good-looking website gives viewers a better initial evaluation, and then there is a possibility to get to the next step. According to Gehrke and Turban (1999, cited by Liao et al., 2006), a good-looking website is also one of the main reasons for consumers to determine whether they will purchase online or offline. Poor quality websites can result in loss of customers to competitors, escalation of costs and reduction in profits (Liao et al., 2006).

Data gathered by the market questionnaire also support to prove this point. In all consumers surveyed, five percentages rank the design of the page in the first important position. It shows more importance than discount information, return policy and delivery methods. Moreover, 17 percentages of the respondents ranked page design of sites in second place which shows that there are a considerable part of the people will be concerned about the design of the page.

As a result, finding a good designer to make sure that the layout and design of the website is not losing any potential customers is vital and necessary to the company.

5.5 Deciding measurement method and identifying performance

It is mentioned in the previous chapter that there are several common measurements for identifying the performance of each single ad: click-through rate (CTR), conversion rate, return on investment (ROI) and using Google analytic tool. And it is agreed that combined measurement is better to monitor and evaluate the marketing performance.

Assumed model for Rings Store to measure the SEM

If you want to assess the ROI, you need to assign values to every action the user performs on the landing page. As a result, a combined measurement of CTR and conversion rate can be a good starting point. The introductions of following metrics are according to Guerini et al. (2010).

- **Basic Metrics:** a higher CTR score indicates which message is best performing. And you know which message has the highest initial impact.
- **Conversion Metrics:** measures to what extent the messages converted subjects to the final goal. And you know the percentage of complete success of the persuasive message.

Normally a higher CTR can be seen as a better result, however when we look at a

combined measurement, the better case can be a lower CTR and a higher conversion rate which indicates a higher return on investment. The company is suggested to try the combined measurement and monitor its performance.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION & CRITICAL REFLECTION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to devise an integrated online marketing strategy which focuses on the search engine marketing (SEM) approach. A market survey was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire. Moreover, social networks marketing approach and email approach were applied to support the research. The aim was to increase general understanding of the current conditions of the online retail market and suggest effective marketing plan to the company.

6.2 Key Findings

The results of online survey showed lot information. First of all, 20-40 year-old people use the Internet most commonly and compared to males, females are more likely to be attracted by online shopping and jewellery shopping. According to the data, almost everyone on the Internet has shopped online before which shows a great potential of online retail market. However just about one quarter of individuals has shopped jewellery online before which indicates that the acceptance of general online shopping is quite high but online jewellery shopping is not so popular so far. Moreover, the use of search engines is extremely frequent by most of the Internet users and many people will use search engines for online shopping which makes search engine marketing (SEM) becoming a competing research topic in the industry.

Furthermore, the most acceptable price range for online jewellery shopping is from £10 to £100. When shopping jewellery online, the fashionable style of products is widely regarded as the most vital factor while the discount delivery and return policy

are less important. However, the good site page design does concern some individuals and has influence on the buying decision. For rings specifically, people tend to buy daily wearing rings and rings for party clubbing instead of rings for some more official occasions.

Except for the results from the market survey, an integrated model of conducting search engine marketing (SEM) was introduced as well. And this model, or the procedure, includes three stages (planning, implement and measuring), and then divided into nine detailed steps. This detailed procedure with was devised based on the conditions of this just-started online jewellery retailer, Rings Store. The model was also supported by the previous findings obtained by the market survey questionnaire.

6.3 Limitations

Although the validity, reliability, integrity and dialectic thinking are always concerned when the research was conducted, there are some limitations in this research:

- There are not so many literatures talking about e-commerce and at the same time being specific on jewellery industry. This makes it difficult to fully understand the industry. Generally, the jewellery industry is a quite special industry that trust, emotions and real touch are relatively more concerned than in other industries. While suspicion and mistrust are originally one of the major challenges in the online retail business which increase the difficulty of giving a comprehensive view of the business.
- Due to the limited time constraints, only about two hundreds questionnaires are responded. This results the researcher having to make assumptions based on own knowledge and views on the business which decrease the validity and

reliability of the results.

- It was in the summer holiday when part of the questionnaires was distributed to the real customers and registered users of the company. According to the owner of Rings Store, the time is not the hot season of sales. As a result, it can be foreseen that not many of the respondents of questionnaire were from the real customers and existed users of the site.
- Although we received some responses from the real customers or potential consumers, the answers were limited to 'loyal' Internet users who use Internet very frequently. This can also be seen from the results of the questionnaire and has already been discussed in the findings part. However, this is still a limitation that we assumed to give up those potential consumers offline at the first place.
- When the online questionnaires were distributed for the market research, the assumed model and procedure of search engine marketing (SEM) activities has already been devised. As a result, although the questionnaire was designed to support the entire model of search engine marketing (SEM) approach, these two were not a perfect fit. If the time is more abundant, the questionnaire and the devised model can be more fits and reasonable.
- There was not much research studying the company's current marketing strategy. Therefore, a lack of comparison between the previous marketing strategy and suggested online marketing plan does exist. This had been missed in the beginning of the project.

6.4 Critical Reflection

Throughout the whole works for the company and dissertation writing process, I feel I have improved a lot from both academic perspective and practical perspective. Originally, I was not good at marketing discipline, but this project and this piece of work do give me confidence in this online marketing field. Not only has this stronger my understanding of theories, I also gained precious experience of working with a company. It is interesting to thinking critically and moving efficiently at the same time and trying to put theories and argument into practice. Although academic knowledge sometimes does work on the real situation but this was exactly the attractive point of working on a company project.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Request for Participation: Customer E-mail

Dear

As a student on the MSc in Management programme at Lancaster University, I am required to produce a piece of management research. The research is based on my client, Rings Store <http://www.ringsstore.co.uk/>, doing their online marketing plan, with the focus specifically on search engine marketing (SEM) campaign. As customers (or potential customers) of Rings Store, your information and your opinion on online-shopping and jewellery-shopping are very important and precious.

The following is the questionnaire link:

https://lums.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1SsRvHSxCGIQUOF

The questionnaire will only take approximately 3 minutes of your time with 9 choice questions and 1 ranking question. The purpose of this is to understand the pattern of online-shopping, the views on jewellery-shopping and the role of search engines in online-shopping. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and the answers you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Many thanks for your time. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Yihong WU

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire for Online Market Research

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 20 to 40
- ☐ Over 40

3. How frequently do you use search engines (like Google)?

- ☐ Several times a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Once for several weeks
- ☐ Once for several days
- ☐ Almost never

4. Have you ever tried online shopping before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. When you shop online, will you search for results via search engines (like Google)?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Always

6. Have you ever shopped jewellery via internet before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. If you are going to search for rings on Google, what phrases you are most likely to search for?

- ☐ "Rings"
- ☐ "Rings store"
- ☐ Specific brand name (such as "Swarovski")
- ☐ Others: _____

8. Rank the following in order of importance if you are going to shop jewellery online:

A. Fashionable style of rings

- B. Page design of the site
- C. Known brand name
- D. Full size range and clear size guide
- E. Jewellery materials
- F. Reasonable and affordable price
- G. Discount coupons and vouchers
- H. Delivery methods and return policy

From the most important to the least: _____

9. What range of price is acceptable for you if you are going to shop jewelleries online?

- ☐ Under £5.00
- ☐ Under £10.00
- ☐ Under £20.00
- ☐ Under £100.00
- ☐ Under £500.00
- ☐ Unlimited

10. What kind of rings you may buy online?

- ☐ For daily wearing
- ☐ For party or clubbing
- ☐ For ceremony
- ☐ Wedding ring/engagement ring
- ☐ Others: _____

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 3 – Basic Survey Statistics gained from Questionnaire

Total Responses: 205

Completed: 200

Completion Mean: 98%

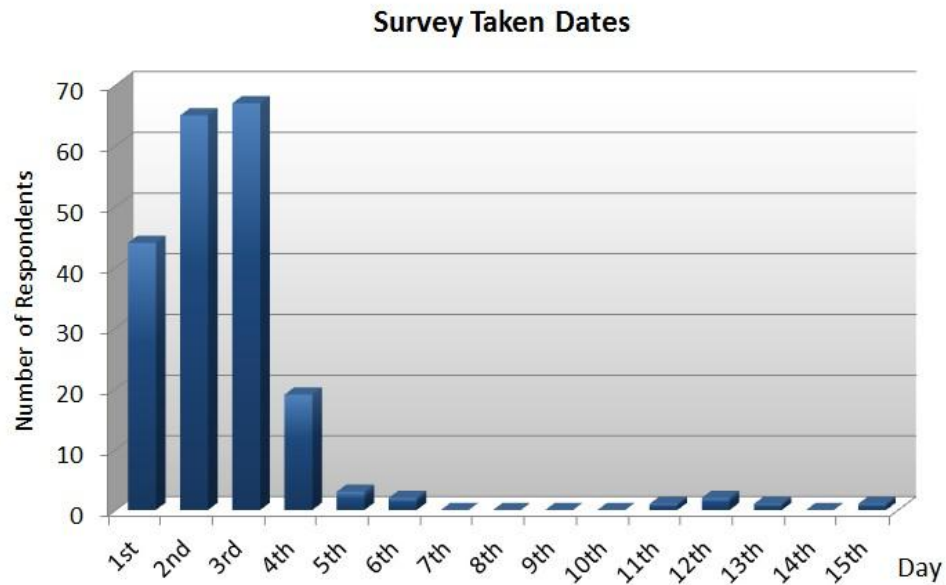


Figure 15. Survey taken dates of the questionnaire

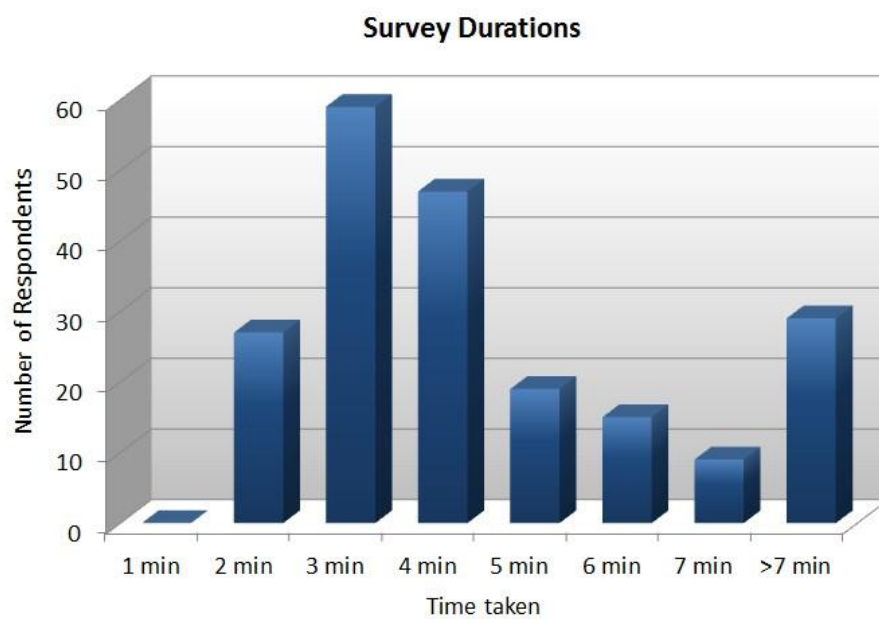


Figure 16. Survey taken durations of the questionnaire

Appendix 4 – Detailed Survey Statistics of Each Question

Detailed statistics of Question 1 to 5 are as follows:

1. Gender

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Male	46	23%
2	Female	154	77%
Total		200	100%

2. Age

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Under 20	22	11%
2	20 to 40	173	87%
3	Over 40	5	3%
Total		200	100%

3. How frequently do you use search engines (like Google)?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Several times a day	175	88%
2	Once a day	8	4%
3	Once for several days	13	7%
4	Once for several weeks	4	2%
5	Almost never	0	0%
Total		200	100%

4. Have you ever tried online shopping before?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Yes	194	97%
2	No	6	3%
Total		200	100%

5. When you shop online, will you search for results via search engines (like Google)?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Never	30	15%
2	Occasionally	111	56%
3	Very Often	40	20%
4	Always	19	10%
Total		200	100%

Detailed statistics of Question 6 to 8 are as follows:

6. Have you ever shopped jewellery via internet before?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Yes	53	27%
2	No	147	74%
Total		200	100%

7. If you are going to search for rings on Google, what phrases you are most likely to search for?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	"Rings"	53	27%
2	"Rings store"	11	6%
3	Specific brand name (such as "Swarovski")	132	66%
4	Others	4	2%
Total		200	100%

8. Rank the following in order of importance if you are going to shop jewellerries online (most important item at the top):

#	Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Responses
1	Fashionable style	85	32	29	22	19	9	3	1	200
2	Page design of the site	8	34	14	17	24	22	32	49	200
3	Known brand name	45	34	46	20	16	19	14	6	200
4	Full size range and clear size guide (for rings)	3	17	18	65	43	22	19	13	200
5	Jewellery materials	24	35	34	33	44	16	6	8	200
6	Reasonable and affordable price	32	31	34	20	18	55	10	0	200
7	Discount coupons and vouchers	2	7	16	13	19	26	87	30	200
8	Delivery methods and return policy	1	10	9	10	17	31	29	93	200
Total		200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	

Detailed statistics of Question 9 and 10 are as follows:

9. What range of price is acceptable for you if you are going to shop jewelleries online?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	Under £5	9	5%
2	Under £10	13	7%
3	Under £20	44	22%
4	Under £100	89	45%
5	Under £500	31	16%
6	Unlimited	14	7%
Total		200	100%

10. What kind of rings you may buy online?

#	Answer	Response	Percentages
1	For daily wearing	153	77%
2	For party or clubbing	78	39%
3	For ceremony	29	15%
4	Wedding ring / Engagement ring	18	9%
5	Others	15	8%
Total		200	100%

Others
For gift
No
Gifts
Gifts
Sorry I do not buy rings. Hope it does not ruin the data. Good luck!
None
Gift
Gift